

ARTICLE ALERT



INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER, U.S. EMBASSY, JAKARTA

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A Multicultural Ramadan



Many of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims will observe the month of Ramadan in different ways, blending their own cultural customs with Islamic traditions of prayer and fasting. In the United States alone, Muslims come

from more than 80 countries and represent a mosaic of ethnic, linguistic, ideological, social and economic groups.

Although the principal teachings of Ramadan remain consistent, the fusion between religious tradition and diverse cultures embodies the interconnectivity and diffusion of a modern, globalized world.

Four young Muslim American authors explain what Ramadan means to them.

The First Fast

Saleha Mallick was raised in Chicago by her Pakistani parents. She attends Northwestern University in Illinois and is an officer in the Interfaith Residents Hall on campus.

The Lessons of Ramadan

Ansaf Kareem, the son of Pakistani parents, was born and raised in Portland, Oregon. He is a senior at Stanford University in California, active in the Muslim Student Awareness Network, and is senior class president.

Ramadan: An American-Egyptian Perspective

Mustafa Abdullah is an American-Egyptian Muslim who has lived in Egypt, Spain, and the United States. He currently attends Wake Forest University in North Carolina, and he is involved in several interfaith organizations, both on and off campus.

Ramadan in a Multi-Faith Family

Ilana Alazzeah was born in San Francisco to an Israeli mother and Palestinian father. She currently attends Smith College in Massachusetts, where she stays active in community service and interfaith work, regularly speaking on panels regarding Islam and religious pluralism.

For more details, please visit:
<http://www.america.gov/ramadan.html>

About the IRC

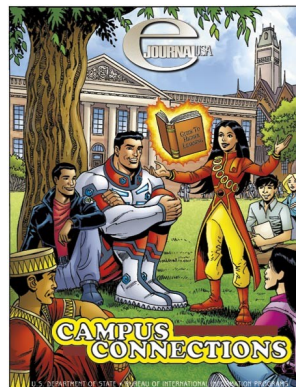
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Books, articles, and websites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official U.S. Government policy.

Campus Connections

A globalized economy makes business and employment spill across national boundaries, so an education abroad is likely to make a young person better prepared for the world's future. Almost double the numbers of students travel abroad for an education today as compared with 20 years ago. Campus Connections examines the international study experience and its influence on individual growth.

You can download the full text of the journal from:
<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa/0809.html>



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ARTICLE ALERT

THE POWER OF A MOBILE PHONE

Global penetration of mobile phones — especially in areas without Internet access — creates new ways for people to connect, make a difference, and motivate peers to take action.

Why are mobile phones powerful?

Multi-Purpose

Today, mobile phones — sometimes called “smart phones” — can come equipped with customized software, Internet access, digital cameras, portable music players and GPS (global positioning system) functions.

Empowering

People using mobile phone cameras now have extraordinary power to expose human rights abuses and promote democratic activities.

Affordable

Mobile phones are cheaper, smaller and more portable than other digital communication devices.

Attainable

More than 60 percent of the world's mobile phone users are in developing countries, with Africa having the highest mobile growth rate.

Widespread

Today there are nearly 4 billion mobile phone subscribers.

Accessible

About 50 percent of the world's population has access to a mobile phone, compared to 10 percent for personal computers.

More details, please visit: http://www.america.gov/mobile_phone.html

REMARKS OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA RAMADAN MESSAGE

Washington, August 21— As the new crescent moon ushers in Ramadan, the President extends his best wishes to Muslim communities in the United States and around the world.

Each Ramadan, the ninth month on the lunar calendar, Muslims fast daily from dawn to sunset for 29 or 30 days. Fasting is a tradition in many religious faiths and is meant to increase spirituality, discipline, thankfulness, and consciousness of God's mercy. Ramadan is also a time of giving and reaching out to those less fortunate, and this summer, American Muslims have joined their fellow citizens in serving communities across the country. Over the course of the month, we will highlight the perspectives of various faiths on fasting and profile faith-based organizations making real impacts in American cities and towns.

This month is also a time of renewal and this marks the first Ramadan since the President outlined his vision for a new beginning between

America and the Muslim world. As a part of that new beginning, the President emphasizes that our relationship with Muslim communities cannot be based on political and security concerns alone. True partnerships also require cooperation in all areas — particularly those that can make a positive difference in peoples' daily lives, including education, science and technology, health, and entrepreneurship — fields in which Muslim communities have helped play a pioneering role throughout history.

The President's message is part of an on-going dialogue with Muslim communities that began on inauguration day and has continued with his statement on Nowruz, during trips to Ankara and Cairo, and with interviews with media outlets such as Al Arabiya and Dawn TV.

As this dialogue continues and leads to concrete actions, the President extends his greetings on behalf of the American people. Ramadan Kareem.

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

1. NO FREE LUNCH (Columbia Journalism Review, July/August 2009, pp.22-36)

Who will pay for news? CJR presents four stories searching for journalism's economic model. Journalists tend to move in packs. Not long ago we thought that the key to the business model of the new era was traffic. Journalism would migrate slowly from paid print content to free Web content—information wants to be free and all—and we would support our expensive newsrooms with the Internet ads that would ride in, bugles blowing, as thousands of visitors came to our sites. More recently came the realization, heightened by a savage recession, that the cavalry is inadequate.

So now what? In this cover package, we set four writers on the problem. Alissa Quart looks at the history of the free culture/free content movement and what it has wrought. Peter Osnos probes the link economy, asking what's fair in the age of Google. David Simon, creator of The

Wire, argues that what will save newsgathering is the courage to erect a paywall and take a stand behind it. And Michael Shapiro makes the case for a hybrid, a savvy mix of free and paid content that, combined with other income, could save the day—if we first rethink what we're offering. What's clear is that the free lunch is gone, and hard choices are waiting.

2. Thompson, Nicholas AND DATA FOR ALL (Wired, vol. 17, no. 7, July 2009, pp. 68-71)

Barack Obama is the first president to appoint a chief information officer for the federal government. Vivek Kundra, who comes to the office having served in a similar position for the District of Columbia, is planning Data.gov, a Web site where all government-produced information will be easy to find, sort and download. When that is done, according to Kundra, the private sector will find ways to use the data which will create new services for the public and new sources of profit for entrepreneurs.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

3. Naím, Moisés MINILATERALISM: THE MAGIC NUMBER TO GET REAL INTERNATIONAL ACTION (Foreign Policy, no. 137, July/August 2009, pp. 136-137)

Not only globalization is falling out of favor in many countries but multilateralism is going through a crisis too, says the author, editor-in-chief of the magazine. The need for effective multicountry collaboration on such issues as climate change, nuclear proliferation and pandemics has soared, but related multilateral talks have failed or execution of agreed solutions has stalled. Naím proposes what he views as a smarter, more targeted approach: bringing to the table the smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem. The magic number will vary greatly depending on the problem, but the author suggests that between a dozen and 20 countries should be able to effectively handle all important global problems. Countries not invited to such "minilateral" talks will denounce this approach as undemocratic and exclusionary, but Naím notes that agreements reached in smaller groups can provide the foundation on which more-inclusive deals can be subsequently built. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/18/minilateralism>.

4. Mousseau, Frederic TOWARD A FUTURE WITHOUT WANT (World Policy Journal, vol. 26, no. 2, Summer 2009, pp. 73-81)

With food riots, high food prices, increasing number of the world's hungry and declining food production in developing countries, the world has to change its agriculture and food policies drastically, says the author, a policy adviser for Oxfam Great Britain. He argues against strategies supported by many developed countries, such as genetically engineered crop varieties, a free-market approach to food production and distribution, and the World Bank's proposal to create a global food reserve. He writes that genetically modified crops have been largely irrelevant to most farmers in the developing world. Governmental support for and protection of farmers against market fluctuations, including floor prices for certain commodities, have in fact worked in Brazil and Indonesia. In his view, the food crisis should be addressed at the local, national and regional levels rather than through creation of a new global mechanism. Mousseau concludes that each nation must find the right combination of policies and interventions adapted to its specific context. Currently available online at <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/wopj.2009.26.2.73>



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SOCIETY & VALUES

5. Brown, Charles L.; Yff, Belinda; Brown, Charles S. HEALTH INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET: SEEKING THE GOLD STANDARD (Choice, vol. 46, no. 12, August 2009, pp. 2239-2249)

The "gold standard" refers to an assessment algorithm used to identify high-quality health-related sites. In medical lingo, it is also known as a criterion standard, a benchmark, of the best comparison tool currently available. Interest in health-related websites has existed since the beginning of the Internet, and they continue to escalate in the present economic climate, as more Americans experience loss of jobs and medical insurance and turn to online resources

for health information. This bibliographical essay describes various health websites, beginning with the substantial amount of material available from the U.S. government, including the National Institutes of Health and the National Library of Medicine; associations and organizations, like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization; the American Medical Association; websites for medical, allied health and nursing students; and electronic resources and e-books for students and professionals. The most popular commercial consumer health site is WebMD, which provides authoritative, multidimensional health information services.

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1. () NO FREE LUNCH
2. () AND DATA FOR ALL
3. () MINILATERALISM: THE MAGIC NUMBER
TO GET REAL INTERNATIONAL ACTION
4. () TOWARD A FUTURE WITHOUT WANT
5. () HEALTH INFORMATION ON THE INTER-
NET:
SEEKING THE GOLD STANDARD

Special Offers:

- () Campus Connections (see page 1)

*Wishing You A Blessed Ramadan !
August-September 2009*

*Information Resource Center
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Neighborhood Mosques

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